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Viewing cable 05LIMA3447, PLOTTING ANOTHER COME-BACK: DOES FORMER PRESIDENT

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
05LIMA3447	2005-08-10 17:23	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Lima

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This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LIMA 003447

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/08/2015
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [KCRM](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: PLOTTING ANOTHER COME-BACK: DOES FORMER PRESIDENT FUJIMORI INTEND TO RETURN TO PERU?

Classified By: D/P...

id: 38338
date: 8/10/2005 17:23
refid: 05LIMA3447
origin: Embassy Lima
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination:
header:

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

----- header ends -----

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LIMA 003447

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/08/2015
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [KCRM](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: PLOTTING ANOTHER COME-BACK: DOES FORMER PRESIDENT FUJIMORI INTEND TO RETURN TO PERU?

Classified By: D/Polcouns Art Muirhead for Reason 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) SUMMARY. Former President Alberto Fujimori has done a masterful job maintaining his standing as a major political force in Peru, despite the fact that he remains exiled in Japan, is prohibited from holding public office here, and is the subject of extradition requests by the GOP. His supporters' claim that Fujimori will return to Lima in December to kick off his campaign for the 2006 elections is receiving a great deal of media attention, but has not

heightened political tensions. Fujimori faces arrest warrants in some 22 criminal cases; we deem it highly unlikely that he will return to Peru until he is assured that he can avoid imprisonment. His strategy probably is to create a sense of expectation and uncertainty about his return as a way of drawing attention to himself and more votes for his front parties. If, as is likely, his forces win 10 percent or so of the seats in the next Congress, Fujimori will be well positioned to trade his political support to the post-Toledo government for an arrangement that keeps him out of jail. (The next Congress is almost certain to be much more factionalized than the present one, obliging the incoming President to strike a lot of deals for support.) Though the President's intimates here have suggested he might be able to swing a deal with the courts by the end of this year to avoid imprisonment while charges against him are tried, any court order to that effect would be unlikely to hold up under the Toledo government's counterattack. That said, Fujimori mastered Peruvian politics for 10 years by catching everyone else completely off guard. His return would throw the political scene into confusion and shake the foundations of Peru's institutionally-weak democracy. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Congresswoman Martha Moyano of the Si Cumple Party, the new name for Fujimori's main political party (loosely translates as "He Keeps His Promises"), called on Polcouns and Deputy on 8/5 to probe USG attitudes towards efforts to effect Fujimori's return and his 2006 presidential bid. Moyano said that Fujimori's attorneys are concentrating on challenging the criminal charges against him (particularly the La Cantuta and Barrios Altos cases involving extra-judicial killings of suspected terrorists), and are attempting to have the arrest orders against him changed to summonses, indicating that once there are no arrest orders outstanding he will return. Moyano added that Fujimori intends to run for President despite the Congressional ban in effect through 2011 against his serving, insisting that the ban would only prevent him from taking office, not from being elected. (COMMENT: The Constitutional Tribunal has declared that Fujimori cannot be a candidate, but the final word seems to lie with the independent National Electoral Board (JNE), which has yet to issue a definitive pronouncement. END COMMENT.) She implied that if Fujimori is elected, a political means will be found to get around the ban. Moyano claimed that Fujimori enjoys 68% support in the Peru's jungle region, and overwhelming support elsewhere in the interior and in the poorer areas of Lima. Although she demurred on endorsing the December return date proclaimed by Si Cumple Secretary General Luis Delgado, she emphasized that Fujimori

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would be back before the elections.

13. (C) D/Polcouns recently discussed Fujimori's intentions with Fernan Altuve, a former Congressman of the Cambio 90 Party (Fujimori's first electoral coalition). Altuve, a Constitutional lawyer, said that he was in frequent contact with the ex-President. He said Fujimori would head the presidential ticket of his new party, and that Si Cumple would field a full slate of Congressional candidates as well, claiming that the party had the best grass-roots organization of any political grouping in Peru. He endorsed the same hypothesis as Moyano on Fujimori's legal status as a candidate: he was banned from taking office, but not from running. Altuve contended that once Si Cumple's Vice Presidential candidate had taken office, the party's Congressmen (with the support of other parties looking to their own future interests) would easily overcome the ban on Fujimori taking office. Altuve also claimed that a new Si Cumple administration would be the best ally imaginable for the USG, taking a hard line against drug trafficking, and opposing the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

14. (C) Assistant Anti-Corruption Prosecutor Walter Hoflich told Poloff in July that his office has no specific contingency plans for Fujimori's arrival, other than to proceed with pressing the charges already pending against the former President. Should Fujimori arrive, Hoflich was sure that he would be arrested by the National Police. He doubted, however, that Fujimori would ever return until charges against him are dropped. The fact that Fujimori maintained several different identity documents indicated his nervousness about being detained by Interpol. Hoflich believed that Fujimori's strategy was to keep in the spotlight by talking about returning, and then hope that a pro-Fujimori bloc in the next Congress would clear the path for him legally.

15. (C) Polcouns raised Fujimori's possible return with Presidency Political Advisor Juan de la Puente and Labor Minister Juan Sheput in separate meetings on 8/8. De la Puente thought it unlikely that Fujimori would return, though he did expect the former President to be nominated to head Si Cumple's ticket, as well as those of the other two pro-Fujimori parties, Cambio 90 and Nueva Mayoria. He

predicted that the JNE would disqualify Fujimori, and that the Vice Presidential candidate on the list, who he thought would be Fujimori's brother Santiago, would replace him. While Fujimori's supporters would seek to portray his disqualification as a political move designed to frustrate the electorate's will, de la Puente thought that this would not have much resonance and that the Fujimoristas will wind up with a dozen-or-so seats in the next Congress.

16. (C) Sheput was not so sanguine. He expressed concern that Fujimori's attorneys could make headway in their legal challenges to the criminal charges against the former President, noting that rampant judicial corruption makes anything possible. He was also worried that the JNE could be subject to political pressure from the Fujimoristas, given that the latter are expected to gain a strong foothold in the next Congress.

17. (C) COMMENT: Toledo Administration contacts have told us repeatedly that they want to put Fujimori on trial (although their pursuit of the extradition case has been lackadaisical), and that they will arrest him if he sets foot in Peru. Fujimori is aware that he would face jail if he comes back voluntarily before the April elections; even though he is endeavoring to cast himself as a victim of persecution, none of our contacts believe he is interested in buffing his credentials by being imprisoned. It is also telling that despite all the trial balloons that have been floated about Fujimori's return, his surrogates here have been unable to energize mass public support like he enjoyed in the past -- even with some semi-clad female dancers as a draw, a recent Si Cumple rally only drew a couple of thousand people. Our assessment is that Fujimori is taking a prudent approach -- trying to rebuild his political base, painting himself as a martyr, and allowing the criminal charges against him to wither with the passage of time. The formula of a patient exile while keeping a hand in the game worked for Alan Garcia -- in the late 90s; few predicted his return as a viable presidential candidate in 2001. Alberto Fujimori seems determined to make history repeat itself. END COMMENT.
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=====CABLE ENDS=====